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ABSTRACT

A study surveyed doctoral reading students' preparation for the job market and their aspirations concerning job placement to determine how effectively colleges and universities are preparing people for employment in the field of reading. A total of 225 students (142 full time, 83 part time) from 34 institutions responded to the questionnaire. All subjects were majoring in reading, but reported 42 different minor areas of doctoral study, including educational administration and special education. The goal of the majority of the respondents was to teach at a university or college, while varieties of other possible positions were being overlooked. The subjects reported a wide range of prospective dissertation titles and topics, falling mostly under the categories of comprehension, instruction, and text analysis. Only 13 students indicated that they were receiving more than passing instruction in computers and microcomputers. The findings suggest that today's doctoral students are receiving the traditional preparation for university teaching. Since most of those hoping for employment as college or university instructors will not be able to find such positions open, faculties of institutions offering doctoral programs in reading, as well as students themselves, should reassess their programs to insure that graduates will be employable. (Appendixes contain a list of schools surveyed, dissertation topics proposed by students, and a copy of the questionnaire.) (HTH)

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DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN READING:

A NATIONAL SURVEY

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DOCTORAL STUDENTS IN READING:

A NATIONAL SURVEY

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Purpose

This study was conducted in order to determine facts about doctoral students' preparation for the job market and their aspirations concerning job placement. Specifically, it was believed that looking at reading majors' related minor fields, their expressed job preferences, and their proposed dissertation topics or titles would reveal, in some degree, how effectively colleges and universities are preparing new people in the field of reading for employment.

The Sample

In October, 1982, a questionnaire was mailed to 112 institutions listed in Graduate Programs and Faculty in Reading, Fourth Edition (1981) which appear to have a doctoral program in which students could major in reading. Thirty-four institutions, or thirty per cent of the original sample, responded to the survey (See Appendices A and B). Five copies of a Doctoral Student Questionnaire (Appendix D) were sent to each institution with the request that the program directors reproduce additional forms for all doctoral students to which this study pertained. In addition, an Institutional Summary Sheet of Doctoral Students' Questionnaire reports (Appendix E) was sent to each institution.

Information about 225 students was received and tabulated. Of the 225 students, 142 attended their institution on a full-time basis. The remaining 83 students attended part-time. Of the doctoral students who responded, 102 expect to obtain their degrees no later than 1983. Another 83 expect their program to be finished in 1984, 26 expect their degrees in 1985, and 14 expect to obtain their degrees in 1986 or later. It is known that there are additional current doctoral students at the responding institutions who did not participate in this study.

Findings

Doctoral Minors — All subjects who responded appear to be majoring in the area of reading, but they report a wide variety of "minors." Forty-two different minor areas of doctoral study are listed in TABLE 1. Educational administration, educational psychology, and special education minors are the most common, but nineteen "unique" minors are mentioned. (Please note that some students listed more than one minor.)

Job Aspirations — Twenty-five different job categories are listed. The 225 subjects' job aspirations are reported in TABLE 2. (Some individuals indicated more than one job preference.) The goal of an overwhelming majority of today's doctoral students is to teach at a university or college, while a variety of other possible positions are not being chosen.

Dissertation topics — The subjects of this study report a wide range of prospective dissertation titles and topics. The examiner analyzed the titles and topics and assigned them to the categories which appear in Appendix C. Categories containing the most entries include: comprehension, instruction, and text analysis. Categories containing the least number of entries include: career education, encoding, individualized reading, listening comprehension, miscue analysis, memory,

philosophy, purposes, and spelling. (It is recognized that some of the titles could have been placed in different categories or in more than one category.)

Discussion

The findings of this investigation suggest that today's doctoral students in the field of reading are receiving the traditional "preparation for university teaching" type of doctoral program which has been much in evidence in the past few decades. Almost half (103) of the 225 doctoral students surveyed report the traditional minors of educational administration, educational psychology, special education, or elementary education. A mere thirteen students, however, indicate that they are receiving more than passing instruction in computers and microcomputers. Minor or cognate areas of study such as adult education, business education, or counseling and guidance, which might help students become employable in community colleges, businesses, or other professions, are not widely reported by the subjects of this study. It is noteworthy that forty-two different minors have been named by participants in the study, indicating more breadth of study than might otherwise be assumed.

Since over two-thirds (160) of the 225 participants hope to be employed by a university or college upon completion of their programs, it is certain that most of these individuals cannot be employed in such jobs. It is highly unlikely that an abundance of university or college teaching positions will be available in the next few years. Faculties of institutions offering doctoral programs in reading as well as students, themselves, should reassess their programs in order to ensure that graduates will be employable. It is most likely that students may graduate from some current doctoral programs lacking important information and

experiences which would help them be employable in areas other than college or university teaching. In order to gain possible job-related experiences, students could, for example, undertake internships in the business community, at community colleges, or with adult literacy programs.

Dissertation topics and titles supplied by the participants of this study indicated a mixture of traditional and currently sought-after areas of research. Institutions looking for "pure research" oriented individuals may have an easier time finding applicants than those institutions which are looking for individuals dealing with "applied research" topics and/or currently "hot" areas such as computers in reading, reading for adults or the aged, teaching reading to bilingual persons, or improving the readability of business correspondence and forms.

TABLE 1

Minor areas of study

Number of Students	Minor	Number of Students	Minor
31	Educational administration	5	Pre-school/early childhood
21	Educational psychology	5	Research
24	Special education	3	Children's literature
17	Elementary education	3	Counseling and guidance
16	Linguistics	3	Curriculum/Instruction
13	Bilingual/bicultural education	3	Inquiry/evaluation
13	Computers and microcomputers	2	Individual, child and family studies
11	Secondary education	2	Learning disabilities
9	English/English education	2	Psycholinguistics
8	Reading/Language arts	2	Sociolinguistics
5	Adult education	2	Statistics
5	Higher education		

Additional, minor areas listed just once by individual students include: Anthropology, cultural foundations, educational tests and measures, English as a second language, geruntology, gifted education, health education, Hispanic literature, human growth and development, language learning, law, librarianship, oral interpretation, psychology, public administration, social foundations, staff development, teacher education, and vocational education.

TABLE 2

Job aspirations

Number of Students	Job Aspiration		Job Aspiration
160	College or university teaching	1	Academic counseling for college athletes
39	Public school administration	1	Adult literacy program
21	Junior college instruction or administration	1	Educational software development
20	Private reading clinic	1	In-servicing
15	Business or industry related	1	Learning disabilities teacher
7	Local or state agency/program	1	Private tutoring
7	Private school	1	Public school specialist
7	Publishing firm	1	Work for a foundation
5	Federal government position	1	Work for international agency
3	Reading teacher - elementary	1	Work for research center
3	Reading teacher - secondary	1	Work in area of psycho-sociolinguistics
3	Undecided	1	Writer
2	Private reading consultant		

APPENDIX A

Institutions participating in the study

Number of Students	Institution	Number of Students	Institution
20	Arizona State University	19	Indiana University
2	Auburn University	3	Kansas State University
16	Hofstra University	2	Mississippi State University
1	Memphis State University	3	Northwestern University
12	Northern Illinois University DeKalb	3	Purdue University
8	SUNY New York	8	University of Arizona
10	Syracuse University	5	University of California, Santa Barbara
5	Temple University	3	University of Mississippi
5	University of Illinois	12	University of Missouri at Columbia
3	University of Oregon	5	University of Oklahoma
12	University of Pittsburgh	5	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
3	University of Southern Florida	4	University of the Pacific
4	University of Washington	5	University of Washington, Seattle
1	Indiana State University		

(179 students in 27 institutions)

APPENDIX B

Program directors' summary forms

Summary forms completed by department heads were submitted by the following:

5	Ball State University
6	The Pennsylvania State University
5	Rutgers University
4	Texas Tech University
12	University of Georgia
4	University of Nebraska
10	University of Rochester

(46 students in 7 institutions)

APPENDIX C

Doctoral students' proposed dissertation topics and titles

ADULTS (5)

Adult education; The role of literacy in the workplace; Work-related reading; The use of humor with the elderly; reading and t.v. interests of retired persons

ATTITUDES (4) Relationship of reading attitude and self-concept to reading achievement of academically gifted fifth and sixth grade students; Do secondary attitude scales stem from the tripartite (cognitive, affective, behavioral) theory of attitude research; Reading attitudes and reading patterns of fourth grade students; The role of self-concept in the remedial reader

BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL (5) Development of reading ability in non-native language students; An exploratory ethnography of the effects of teacher language beliefs on reading instruction in the bilingual classroom; Language functions exploration of five and six year old bilingual students in two instructional environments; The effects of prior knowledge and reader proficiency on the comprehension of text by non-native speakers of English; Reading in a foreign language

CAREER EDUCATION (1) Reading and career education

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (2) Children's literature (listed by 2 individuals)

COLLEGE READING (3) Developmental programs for the marginally prepared college student; Quality of main idea identification by special admission college freshmen; Using writing to improve comprehension at the college level

COMPREHENSION (15) Influence of story grammar instruction on the narrating comprehension of third graders; The effects of literacy on thought processes; Reading strategies and cognitive processes; Sense of story as it relates to reading achievement; Reading comprehension; Level of questioning in basal texts; Metacognition; Comprehension-to be narrowed; A child's sense of story; Effects of interest-inducing questions on students' reading comprehension; Relationship of teacher questions and student responses during a DRA and a DRTA (examining student levels of critical and non-critical thinking); Cognitive styles; Metacognition; The effects of syntactic complexity on reading comprehension; Comprehension strategies

COMPUTERS (6) Computer-assisted reading programs; The effect of computer-assisted instruction and post-reading graphic text organizers on the expository writing of underprepared college freshmen; Training students to generate questions via the microcomputer; Development of computer-assisted instructional software for reading disabled students; The part microcomputers play in self-concept and learning enhancement; Effects of small group and computer-assisted inference training programs on 5th grade students' comprehension of implicit causal relationships

CONTENT AREA READING (4) Instructional research on mainstreamed hearing-impaired high school students in content area reading; Lexical understanding in content disciplines; Effects of two types of preorganizers to facilitate comprehension and recall of social studies materials for seventh grade students; Task emphasis differences within discussion accompanying guides for three levels of comprehension during content area lessons

CURRICULUM (2) Curriculum change considerations and processes in the development of elementary language arts programs; Curriculum development

for atypical children

DIAGNOSIS/ASSESSMENT (4) The effectiveness of selected individualized reading diagnostic tests in determining instructional reading level for basal placement; Development of an instrument to assess attitudes toward censorship of literature read by adolescents; Validation of a formula for predicting achievement in remedial reading; Visual discrimination assessment

EARLY READING (5) Language development, reading readiness, kindergarten students' working mothers; A multivariate analysis of first graders' print awareness as related to reading achievement, intelligence and gender; Effects of pictures on beginning reading instruction

ENCODING (1) Phonological encoding of good and poor readers (decoders)

INDIVIDUALIZED READING (1) Individualized reading programs

INSTRUCTION (10) The effect of in-service training in language theory upon classroom interactions during reading instruction; Improvement of teacher education in reading; Grouping in reading; Instructional support personnel effectiveness; Qualitative case study of junior-senior high teachers' instructional decisions about reading activities for their students; Teachers' theories and rationales as determiners of differential instructional and interactional practices employed in small group reading instruction; Summarization strategies/protocol analysis; Classroom management; Instructional discourse between teacher and students during reading events; A delphi study of expert opinion as to the components of a theoretically sound program

INTERESTS/VALUES (3) Children's reading interests; Relating reading interests and/or development of interests to improved reading achievement; Analysis of values embedded in Chinese popular literature for children

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (2) A study of the relationship between early elementary school children's use of specific syntactic structures and their ability to conserve; Language usage within an identified social context and its impact on early reading

LISTENING COMPREHENSION (1) An analysis of listening-reading comprehension scores for remedial readers

MISCUE ANALYSIS (1) Miscue analysis on expository materials

MEMORY (1) Memory

MISCELLANEOUS (1) Using relaxation techniques to aid remedial readers

ORAL READING (3) The impact of language differences on oral reading analysis; Interrelationship of the acquisition of oral and written language, and the relation of acquisition to reading achievement, exposure to literature and cognitive development; Relationship between oral interpretation instruction and reading achievement

PHILOSOPHY (1) Philosophical perspectives as they relate to the field of reading

PURPOSES (1) Efficiency of pre-reading purposes in basal reading lessons

SPELLING (1) Spelling acquisition

STUDY SKILLS (6) (Listed by three individuals) A description of a whole language reading and study skills program on non-traditional college students; Learning style and study skills and habits; Undergraduate study skills

TEXT ANALYSIS (11) Interaction and influence of semantic features of text; Reader/text transaction in semiotic perspective: a naturalistic study; The role of memory for text features within children's emergent reading ability; The effects of different written introductions on children's processing of text; Discourse structure and the reading comprehension of

ESL students: Selective reading strategies with unfamiliar longer text; Interaction between text and reader in reading comprehension; Matching syntactic structure of textbook with oral language proficiency levels of ESL students; The effects of metacognitive processing on immediate and delayed memory of extended discourse; An analysis of textbook study systems; Text analysis of academic discourse

VOCABULARY (6) Vocabulary instruction; Investigation of process of acquiring word meaning from context in intermediate grade children; Role of linguistic awareness in reading disability; A framework for vocabulary acquisition based upon prior knowledge level in the content area; The relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension; Vocabulary of young adults

WRITING (7) The correlation between writing and reading comprehension; The writing of children--a follow-up study of children who were reading at age four and are now third graders; Improvement of expository comprehension through self-questioning; Writing instruction in NYC elementary schools as it is related to the writing process; What is the effect of teaching method on the writing achievement of third grade students; The effect of oral and overt cues on revision behavior of mature writers; The effect of writing instruction on growth in reading comprehension and story writing ability

APPENDIX D

Doctoral Student Questionnaire

(Intended only for doctoral students who are receiving major area emphasis training in the field of reading)

Please complete this form and quickly return it to the departmental representative who is helping to conduct this survey. Thank you.

Place the name of your college or university here: _____

1. My status is: _____ full-time; _____ part-time

2. I expect to complete my doctoral program in the year 198_____.

3. My major is: _____

My minor is:

_____ educational psychology
_____ special education
_____ elementary education
_____ linguistics
_____ bilingual/bicultural education
_____ educational administration
_____ counseling and guidance
_____ secondary education
_____ higher education
_____ other, please list: _____

4. After I graduate, the position in which I hope to be employed is:

_____ college or university teaching
_____ business or industry related
_____ private reading clinic
_____ private school
_____ local or state agency/program
_____ public school administration
_____ publishing firm
_____ junior college instruction or administration
_____ federal government position
_____ other, please specify _____

Please indicate your dissertation title or topic here, if possible:

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

Institutional Summary Sheet
of Doctoral Students' Questionnaire reports

Your name: _____

Your Address: _____

_____

Zip_____ Telephone ( ) _____

Please indicate the total number of students whose comments are being tabulated: _____

1. Please indicate the number of students who are presently enrolled in your doctoral program

on a full-time basis? _____ on a part-time basis? _____

2. Please indicate the number of doctoral students who expect to complete their degree in

1982 _____ 1983 _____ 1984 _____ 1985 _____ 1986 or later _____

3. Please indicate a total for each of the various minors being pursued by your doctoral students.

_____ educational psychology
_____ special education
_____ elementary education
_____ linguistics
_____ bilingual/bicultural education
_____ educational administration
_____ counseling and guidance
_____ secondary education
_____ higher education
_____ others, please list:

_____
_____

4. Please indicate the number of students who desire each type of position upon completion of their programs.

_____ college or university teaching
_____ business or industry related
_____ private reading clinic
_____ private school
_____ local or state agency/program
_____ public school administration
_____ publishing firm
_____ junior college instruction or administration
_____ federal government position
_____ others, please specify:

_____

5. Approximately how many teaching positions do you expect to have available in the next four years? _____

6. Do you wish to receive the results of this survey? Yes ___ No ___